

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of doing business, comprising:

providing an electronic ticket control system for issuing
virtual tickets to public-facility patrons through virtual ticket
devices;

receiving virtual ticket exchange requests from a plurality of
virtual ticket devices;

storing the exchange requests in an exchange request database;
analyzing the exchange requests to determine if any are
eligible for exchange;

sending an exchange notification message to the virtual ticket
devices associated with at least one eligible exchange;

receiving an exchange confirmation message from the eligible
virtual ticket devices associated with the at least one exchange;
and

updating the virtual tickets when all virtual ticket devices
associated with the at least one exchange respond affirmatively.

2. The method of doing business of claim 1, further comprising
the step of maintaining an ownership database for storing ownership
information related to issued virtual tickets.

3. The method of doing business of claim 2, further comprising
the step of updating the ticket ownership database to reflect a

3' change in ownership resulting from a ticket exchange.

1 4. The method of doing business of claim 1, further comprising
2 the step of, before storing the exchange request in the database,
3 confirming ownership of any virtual tickets offered for exchange.

1 5. The method of doing business of claim 1, wherein the step of
2 analyzing includes comparing the exchange conditions of more than
3 two exchange requests in order to determine if more than two
4 requests can be satisfied in the same exchange transaction.

1 6. The method of doing business of claim 1, further comprising
2 the step of providing a downloadable virtual ticket exchange user-
3 interface program for downloading by patrons onto virtual ticket
4 devices and use in exchanging virtual tickets through the
5 electronic ticket control system.

1 7. The method of doing business of claim 1, further comprising
2 the step of performing a validity check with respect to the
3 received request before storing it in the exchange request
4 database.

1 8. The method of doing business of claim 1, further comprising
2 the steps of:

3 performing a validity check on ticket exchange requests stored

4 in the database; and

5 deleting stored requests that are determined to be invalid.

1 9. The method of doing business of claim 1, further comprising
2 the step of sending a message to at least one virtual ticket
3 device, the message containing information relating to virtual
4 ticket exchange requests.

1 10. The method of doing business of claim 9, wherein the
2 information relating to virtual ticket exchange requests includes a
3 notification that a request has been received that corresponds to
4 the virtual ticket stored on the virtual ticket device.

1 11. The method of doing business of claim 9 wherein the
2 information relating to virtual ticket requests further includes an
3 incentive for offering for exchange the ticket held on the virtual
4 ticket device.

1 12. The method of doing business of claim 1 further comprising the
2 step of charging a service fee to customers for brokering the
3 exchange requests.

1 13. The method of doing business of claim 1 further comprising the
2 steps of charging the account of a first patron an amount for the
3 ticket exchange; and

4 crediting the account of a second patron a corresponding
5 amount for the ticket exchange.

1 14. The method of doing business of claim 1 wherein at least some
2 of the exchange requests include information that a patron is
3 either willing to pay for or requires payment for a ticket
4 exchange.

1 15. The method of doing business of claim 14 further comprising
the steps of charging the account of a first patron an amount for
the ticket exchange; and

crediting the account of a second patron a corresponding
amount for the ticket exchange.

16. An electronic ticket exchange system for use by public-
facility patrons having virtual tickets stored on virtual ticket
3 devices that are capable of communicating with the ticket exchange
4 system, said ticket exchange system comprising:

5 an exchange request database for storing information related
6 to exchange requests received from virtual ticket devices;

7 a processor in communication with the exchange request
8 database;

9 a ticket-exchange control program for directing the processor
10 to compare exchange requests stored on the exchange request
11 database to determine if an exchange is possible.

1 17. The system of claim 16, further comprising a seat-view image
2 database for storing images that can be transmitted to a virtual
3 ticket device.

1 18. The ticket exchange system of claim 16, wherein the ticket
2 control program also directs the processor to confirm the validity
3 of virtual ticket exchange requests.

1 19. The ticket exchange system of claim 16, further comprising a
2 downloadable user-interface program.

1 20. The ticket exchange system of claim 16, further comprising an
2 ownership database for storing information related to public-
3 facility virtual ticket ownership.

1 21. The ticket exchange system of claim 20, wherein the ticket
2 exchange control program directs the processor to confirm the
3 ownership of any virtual ticket offered for exchange.

1 22. The ticket exchange system of claim 16, further comprising a
2 terminal in communication with the ticket exchange system that
3 accepts public-facility tickets that are not virtual tickets and
4 converts them to virtual tickets for possible exchange.

1 23. The ticket exchange system of claim 22, wherein the terminal
2 reissues a second non-virtual ticket in exchange for a first non-
3 virtual ticket that has been successfully exchanged.

1 24. A method of doing business comprising:
2 electronically brokering the exchange of seats between patrons
3 at a public facility.

1 25. The method of claim 24 comprising the step of providing the
patrons images of views from seats available for exchange.

26. The method of claim 25 further comprising charging at least one
of the patrons a service fee for the exchange.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein the service fee is based upon
the selling price of the exchanged tickets.

1 28. The method of claim 24 comprising the step of prioritizing
2 ticket exchange requests.